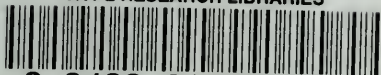


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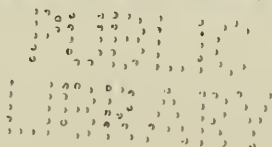
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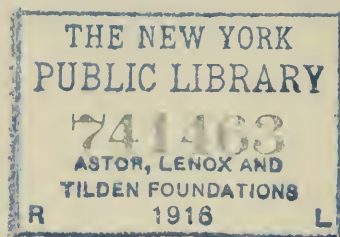
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R. A. WAITE, JR.

SECRETARY RELIGIOUS WORK DEPARTMENT
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PRELIMINARY COACHING.

As daily exercise is the source of power this course calls for some work each day with a weekly try-out. "Individual Coaching" attempts to give the main principle which the other six paragraphs are expected to explain. Not all the citations used can be found word for word in the Book of Instructions; they are often literal renderings and always legitimate translations. Helpful hints have been borrowed from too many sources for due credit to be given, though their use is an acknowledgment of their worth.

STUDY I.

LAST DOWN! TWO FEET TO GAIN!

The score is five to four. There is but one minute to play. The losing eleven has the ball well within the five yard line. "Last down! Two feet to gain!" shouts the referee. The signal is given, but the play does not net the required distance. "Lost!" says the face of each member of the defeated team. Just so there is a "Last down" some time in life, when if a man does not gain his two feet spiritually he is lost.

There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path,
That marks the boundary between
God's patience and His wrath;

.
O where is that mysterious bourne,
By which our path is crossed,
Beyond which God Himself hath sworn
That he who goes is lost?

Is not such a line chalked on the gridiron of life by Rev. 22:10-15?

So long as men continue willfully and willingly in evil they shut out all hope of the action of grace. Persistence in sinning is

2 LAST DOWN! TWO FEET TO GAIN!

spiritual suicide. Read Heb. 6:1-8. For him who continuously re-crucifies Christ there is no forgiveness. Not only in baseball, but also in the experience of too many men, comes "Three strikes and out." Like food for our bodies, the food for our souls may be rejected until the power to receive it perishes. To-day there are men in our gymnasiums and on our athletic fields, as well as in many other places, who are slowly but surely rooting out the last vestige of the spiritual sense.

"Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near" (Isa. 55:6). This hints that there will come a day when He cannot be found, an hour when He will not hear. It is not that God will turn from man, but that man will so paralyze his power of turning back to Him that repentance, and therefore forgiveness, is made impossible. Forsaking Christ makes men resemble those wandering planets which, having broken from the guiding power, dash farther and farther into the black darkness without one spark of heat or light.

There are "cannots" with God. Just as man cannot change the deciduous thorn into the evergreen fir or make a triangle with four

right angles, so God cannot invade the domain of choice to force His salvation upon man. The angels hear Him sigh forth with unutterable sadness: "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone" (Hosea 4:17). And the soul cries out as did Cain, "Mine iniquity is greater than can be forgiven" (Gen. 4:13, margin). Moreover, Isaiah declares: "To the teaching and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (8:20).

Indeed, the bosom-friend apostle is right when he says, "There is sin unto death" (1 John 5:16). Read 1 John 5:13-17. Although "all unrighteousness is sin: and there is sin not unto death," whatever act tends to break the fellowship between the soul and the soul's Saviour entices man into that sinful state which is "unto death." The self-choice of the will, which ends in self-induced callousness of the soul, shuts a man out from the kingdom of God. It is his own hand, not that of God, which closes the door of grace.

But the highest authority on forgiveness of sin is Jesus. Read what He has to say in Matt. 12:31, 32. Is it the object or the source that makes the blasphemy unpardonable?

4 LAST DOWN! TWO FEET TO GAIN!

When the source is malice, selfish preference of wrong, rooted dislike of the good, then the sin is against the Holy Spirit as the Inspirer of all good, and the sinner "is held fast bound by an eternal sin" (Mark 3:29).

Individual Coaching:—Have you heeded the great Referee's shout, "Last down! Two feet to gain!"? Do not have said of you what was said of Samson, "He knew not that Jehovah was departed from him."

STUDY II.

FORTY LOVE!

Just to hint at an unpleasant thing, to call "nothing" "love" as in tennis and ping-pong, may be the most delicate way of speaking sometimes; but not to call sin sin is dangerous. No wonder Isaiah denounces as sunk to the very depths those who confound good and evil. Read Isa. 5:20. To call a debauched dandy "fast," to gild licentiousness with the term "gallantry," to dignify profanity with the title "broken Bostonese," does not withdraw one whit of the unholy from the act specified. Nothing is ever gained by covering up a God-defying sin with a dictionary crazy-quilt, for Christ can see right through our intellectual jugglery with words.

He who makes of right his wrong and he who makes
of wrong his right,
Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah.
(Prov. 17:15; cf. Prov. 24:24.)

When we live as though the Ten Commandments had been suspended while we sinned, we are prone to blanch the breach of God's law with some conscious-searing excuse. Even

among us a woman forfeits her right to respect by what in a man is too commonly considered an honorable distinction and at the worst an excusable slip. In fact we hug the word venial to ourselves because we love to minimize that tremendous thing,—SIN.

The power of evil to beautify itself is like that of the crawling caterpillar to change into a butterfly circling from flower to flower. But what is the symbolic teaching of Deut. 14:19? Sin as a caterpillar we loathe, but sin as a butterfly captivates us and we chase after it to catch it in our net. Wrong so often decks itself in robes that resemble the robes of righteousness that even the elect of God are in danger of being deceived. Lincoln, about to gain his end by means that were doubtful, exclaimed with disgust, "Hay, what we call patriotic statesmanship is nothing but a combination of individual meannesses for the general good." Our constant prayer should be that of Solomon, "Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart . . . that I may discern between good and evil" (1 Kings 3:9).

When the lie is that of Ananias and Sapphira the world dubs it a "white lie." Study Acts 5:1-11. But all lies have the sentence

of death written down against them in heaven's code, and slowly or rapidly they advance without a pause toward their hour. Therefore, "when Christ pleads for the new heart, He urges man to break with him who is the father of lies and swear fidelity to Him who is the God of truth, whose ways are happiness, and whose paths are peace."

Nor dare we speak of David's awful fall as a "foible." Recall the king's sin against Uriah as recorded in 2 Sam. 11:12. The Bible everywhere paints wickedness in its true color. God alone has the courage to put in the Book, which is given for man's instruction, the story of so foul a shame in all its nakedness, without the slightest attempt to excuse it. Sin is sin everywhere and everywhen. Nor does any adornment cause it to lose its identity in the sight of God.

Jesus Himself always recognized Satan's promptings as they appeared in life and never hesitated to call the devil by name. When He began to teach His disciples that "the Son of man must suffer many things, . . . and be killed," Peter taking hold of Him drew Him aside and said: "Pity thyself, Lord: this shall never be unto thee." But Jesus flung from

His arm the too familiar touch as He exclaimed, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16:21-23). When we are doing the devil's work we must put ourselves where Christ puts us, on the devil's level.

Individual Coaching:—Is your character a paper-wad? Then, although you may cover it with tin-foil and put it in a sealed box you cannot make it a league ball.

STUDY III.

SCORING.

“They’re off!” No, unable to make a fair start, the horses are sent back to try again. They must continue “scoring” until they get the word to go. In the Christian race the rich young ruler is a case in point. Study Matt. 19:16-22, and the parallel passages. This possible Paul came up to the score, but showed that he was not ready to start. Christ’s application to him of His bold universal rule, that every cause of stumbling must be sacrificed, compelled him to see himself as in a mirror, but he could not persuade himself that to give up his wealth was the “good thing” he sought. When the answer to the question, “What is the chief end of man?” is “Money,” it is impossible to cross the starting-line into the Kingdom of God.

Coming to the point that marks the beginning of the Christian character and then turning back into worldliness is a dangerous proceeding. Salvation postponed always has to be met with back dues. The coupons on the bonds of unrighteousness bear a fearful

interest which will have to be paid in God's good time. King Agrippa was almost persuaded. Read Acts 26:27-29. But almost persuaded is often no better than being absolutely lost. Nor is it less perilous to remain on the starting-line in the "get set" position of the sprinter. Sorrowfully sidling into sin or silently staying on the score are alike remaining out of the kingdom.

Yet "if our gospel is hid, it is hid by those things that perish, by which the god of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving" (2 Cor. 4:3, 4). The fact that applause, or wealth, or pleasure, or any other thing, veils Christ from some men is their condemnation. It marks them as persons on the descent to destruction. Sin alone is the dark cloud that hides the Son from the sinner's eyes.

The day of salvation that dawned for Felix became at once the night of his doom. See Acts 24:25. He made up his mind that over the cross of Christ, planted in his guilty path, he would press his way onward to the gates of hell. Trusting the morrow was the devil's nurse for this man's perdition. Our present feelings must be deepened into decision, or be entirely dissipated by delay. At an immense

risk to ourselves we treat Christ as the fishes acted toward St. Anthony:—

The sermon now ended, each turned and descended;
The Eels went on eeling, the Pikes went on stealing:
Much delighted were they,
But preferred the old way.

The history of many souls is the record, not of faithfulness to Christ but of slavery to sin. "They themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is worsted, by the same is he enslaved" (2 Peter 2:19; cf. Rom. 6:16; John 8:34). One may be strong enough and supple enough to do all sorts of athletic stunts, and yet not have the moral power to tear himself free from the steel-fingered clutch of sin, so his soul is a whipped soul. Every form of evil, big or little, under whose iron heel we lie prostrate, constantly advertises our spiritual weakness. If a man is fastened to the cross of sin, it matters not whether it is done with railroad spikes or with a little row of brass tacks around the edges of his clothes.

The serious business in which Christ is engaged demands that the severest tests be applied to those who would be co-workers with Him. To be sure we should count the cost before we take our individual parts "in suffer-

ing hardship, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus," but our Captain also must count the cost before He can permit us to take our places in the ranks. He is fighting great battles against Satan's hosts and He must be sure that not one of His ten thousand soldiers has a cowardly streak, but that each can be depended upon to do or to die. Read Luke 14:31-33.

Individual Coaching:—The test Jesus places upon you shows you the squad to which you belong. When He tries you out does He find you wanting?

STUDY IV.

WHO WON?

For weeks great interest has been taken in the game just over, so on all sides the question you hear asked is, "Who won?" Yet of more vital importance than any athletic contest is the struggle between Christ and Satan with their respective followers. Well is it to ask every young man about the result of the battle which is to determine his destiny. "Who won?" Was it Barabbas, representing worldliness, which is the murderer of human souls, or was it Christ, representing the one power for cleansing and keeping clean? Study Mark 15: 6-15.

Ever since the voicing of that most remarkable of all His sayings, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (John 12:32), Christ has been the mighty magnet which has pulled this world toward the heavenlies. With persistent sureness the religion of the cross is drawing the world to discipleship. Jesus has won by His love the most stubborn souls history mentions.

Just as the sun raises the surface waters in vapor, so the Son lifts man upward in character and will yet place the world at the Father's side.

To the constant question which comes ringing down through the ages, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with crimsoned garments from Bozrah?" the answer ever is, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Read Isa. 63:1-6. What is the tormenting Edom which is always alert to tackle you for a loss? Is it sensuality, passion, lust for glory and material advancement? Whatever it is, it trips you often, it throws you hard. You gather yourself together in a desperate effort to gain your distance, but it downs you almost before you have started. Take Jesus into your next play as interference and you will win.

Through God we shall do valiantly;
For he it is that will tread down our adversaries.
(Ps. 60:12.)

Christ has conquered sin, so that we need not be its slaves any longer. Get the kernel out of Heb. 2:14-18. Hell chose Gethsemane as its field for the contest, but there, even in the hour of His greatest weakness, Jesus won, and now He rejoices in the trophy of His

victory. During the struggle Captain Satan was greatly disabled, but he was not hurt enough to be entirely out of the game the remainder of the season. Limping and winded he still has a great deal of fight in him.

But Christ's splendid victory is all in vain for us unless we let Him conquer our souls by His Spirit. "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24, 25). Only when a man is willing to say, not "Jesus," but "My Jesus," can he realize that the power of sin over him has forever been broken, and that he may live a life of freedom in the righteousness of Christ. It is the Lord Himself abiding in you who is your ally. To man plus man overcoming would be impossible, but to man plus God all things are possible (cf. Mark 10:27).

The Christian belief in Christ unites all partial victories everywhere into one great victory which is the triumph of its Lord. Jesus will conquer, and in His conquest, whenever it shall come, Paul's vision will be verified. Get the "wherefore" from Phil. 2:5-11. The sun of the Gospel had hardly risen when Voltaire said, "I see the twilight of the Christian

day." He did see it, but it was the morning not the evening twilight.

Individual Coaching:—Are you saying to Satan, "I am a spot over which your authority does not extend, a ledge of moral granite against which your waves of temptation dash themselves to pieces"?

STUDY V.

THE STROKE.

Who shall be the stroke of the 'Varsity eight? The man who can best set the standard of rowing for the other men in the boat. Who is our example as we row in the single scull race of life? None other than the perfect man Christ Jesus. Peter declares, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps." Read 1 Peter 2:21-25. And the "example" or "copyhead" is the perfect piece of writing which we are to reproduce as exactly as possible, until every stroke of every letter is like the Pattern. As living epistles our handwriting dare not be so faint or blurred or blotted that it cannot be read.

Jesus, too, bids us take Him as our standard. Study John 13:12-17 with the preceding incident. Not a code but a character is the highest ideal of human life. In our Master's school are many benches, and He invites us to come, learn of Him. And in Him we have an example, meek beyond comparison, yet unequalled in strength; gentle, as no one has ever been

gentle before, yet unparalleled in sternness; one who presents to us the best qualities of woman, and yet a manliness which is a model to the strongest. We must live like Him in this world, if we would live with Him in the next.

But what a strange invitation to be sent out by Love! "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Pharisaeism or "I-ism" is not dead. Nor is any love so blind as self-love. It is stone blind. Yea, it is also stone deaf and stone dead to all but its own little self. When is this self denied? When the center of sin, which is "I"—s-I-n, is reduced to zero and the cipher or "o" put in the place of the "I"—S-o-n. By His teaching Jesus draws men together. Notice particularly how He bids each of us, when we enter our solitary closet and shut out the world, to use the plurals, "our, we, us," and not the singulars, "my, I, me." "Mankind" is nothing more than "man-kinned."

We can only succeed in making our wills and Christ's will one by fixing our attention upon Him. "Therefore let us . . . lay aside every weight, and the sin which is admired of

many, and let us run with stedfastness the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the captain and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:1, 2). Many a race has been lost because the eyes were turned in some other direction than straight ahead. In the Christian life to look down upon him who is beneath you is to have compassion; to look out upon him beside you is to have love; to look in upon the real him within you is to have humility; to look up to Him above you is to have power.

If we do not boast of it, are we not contenting ourselves with the idea that we are fair average Christians? Our capital "I" is so tall that when we talk over the wire which we have run to the top of it, we do not have much difficulty persuading ourselves that we are telephoning God. Yet in this world the right Christian is the one who knows well that he has not attained, and is determined to "press on toward the goal unto the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

At Joshua's appeal the people pledged themselves for the service of Jehovah. Study Joshua 24:14-25. But their leader knew too well their weakness and was fearful that for-

mer failures would be repeated. There is no demand for that soap-bubble loyalty, which, rising because of its own lightness and blown about by the slightest breath of opposition or flattery, soon bursts and does not leave moisture enough at the vanishing point to show what it was. What is wanted is that cannon-ball faithfulness, projected by the power of a consecrated determination, piercing the armor of sin, and slaying all wicked tendencies in their very strongholds.

Master, go on, and I will follow Thee
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty.

Individual Coaching:—Do your actions always proclaim,—

O Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

STUDY VI.

TRAINING.

What athlete does not realize the necessity of training? Nevertheless, to the Christian it is infinitely more necessary. That we may be fit to endure any test which may come to us we must pursue a course of suitable exercise. One broad principle should govern the Christian runner—Anything that slackens the speed in the spiritual race must be abandoned. The great question to settle is whether this, that, or the other saps in any measure the spiritual energy and thus diminishes the chances for winning the prize of a noble character in Christ Jesus. Look up Rom. 13:11-14.

Keeping up the spirits of the men is of prime importance in training an athletic team. This can best be done with the block "C" squad by bringing them together in good fellowship. "Let us attentively consider one another to stimulate unto love and good works, not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is" (Heb. 10:24, 25). And surely we must realize that, although there are some inside the church who ought to be out,

there are others outside the church who ought to be in.

In that old saying, "Man is what he eats," there is a world of truth. The young fellow who lives on chocolates and cream-puffs will never be a strong athlete. Fit food must be eaten if we would be robust. And the one best food for spiritual strength is the Word of God. A Christian cannot be strong until he learns that the secret of power lies in the daily meditation on the Bible. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8).

Counseling with the coach is another important element in training. So also it is a fundamental principle of religion that no large growth in grace is ever gained by one who does not take time to be alone with God. Look up Heb. 4:16. And when you counsel with God in prayer, do not speak of "all your need," flung in one great, careless heap before Him, but of "every need of yours," each one labeled and spread out in order before Him. Com-

pare the Authorized and Revised Versions at Phil. 4:19. Nor must we ever forget that prayer will keep us from breaking training or that breaking training will keep us from prayer.

Sometimes an athlete has been overtrained, so that when the moment of the test comes he finds himself "stale." Work as hard as he can, he does not accomplish what he has easily done in the past. A few among Christians are members of so many organizations, on so many committees, and attend so many meetings, that they are suffering from nervous prostration spiritually. What they need is to get alone with Christ in the Gospels and rest awhile. Read 1 Cor. 9:24f.

What a feeling of faintness arising to anger comes over a crowd of supporters when an old standby fails because he has broken training! Read 1 Thess. 5:22. Too many character-athletes take off the top rail of the training-fence. They expect, of course, to remain on the right side, but if they want to vault over the lowered fence, there will be no harm. It will be only a pretty feat, for which they think they should be roundly applauded in-

stead of being soundly condemned. Keep up the fence!

Individual Coaching:—Have you a timber-worm in your character-building?

In storied Venice, down whose rippling streets
The stars go hurrying, and the white moon beats,
Stood the great Bell Tower, fronting seas and skies—
Fronting the ages, drawing all men's eyes;
Rooted like Teneriffe, aloft and proud,
Taunting the lightning, tearing the flying cloud.

It marked the hours for Venice: all men said
Time cannot reach to bow that lofty head:
Time, that shall touch all else with ruin, must
Forbear to make this shaft confess its dust;
Yet all the while, in secret, without sound,
The fat worms gnawed the timbers underground.

The twisting worm, whose epoch is an hour,
Caverned its way into the mighty tower;
And suddenly it shook, it swayed, it broke,
And fell in darkening thunder at one stroke.
The strong shaft, with an angel on the crown.
Fell ruining; a thousand years went down!

STUDY VII.

FACING.

The game of lacrosse is commenced by a player from each side "facing" for the ball with the crosse till one of them succeeds in sending it toward the goal. So Christ and Satan are facing for each one of us. Does not that verse from Paul tell the story of all our lives? Study Rom. 7:21, and its immediate context. All through life the enemy is present, although he may constantly shift his point of attack as we grow from youth to the full-grown man. But, thanks be to Christ, we may confidently count upon all the strength that is needed to continue the fight to a victorious end. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the dynamite of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Yes, in the Christian life unending conflict is one of the few things we must expect. Pray as we may, Satan sees to it that no man is left free from his attacks. A more pitiful figure history does not record than that of Balaam, the mysterious prophet from the East, as he stood in that memorable soul-struggle pictured

in Num. 22—24. At his hand is the bribe of honor and wealth, if he would curse instead of bless Israel. His judgments and his feelings were all with the tented army of the true God. "How goodly are thy tents, O Israel!" he involuntarily exclaimed. But self-love struggled vigorously on the other part and, alas! the victory was not with the nobler spirit.

But when a man does fall, does he prefer to lie in the dirt, or does he start up with alarm from his low place in sorrow for his fall? Contrast Peter and Judas, Luke 22:62 and Matt. 27:5. Just as we naturally resume the perpendicular attitude when we have been tripped up bodily, so it should be our instinct to resume our attitude of uprightness after any fall into sin. Every one gets into the tempter's snare, but the difference between one and another is as Father Tabb in homely phrase puts it:—

"Unc' Si, de Holy Bible say,
In speakin' ob de jus',
Dat he do fall sebben times a day:
Now, how's de sinner wus?"

"Well, chile, de slip may come to all;
But den de diffe'nce foller,—
For, ef you watch him when he fall,
De jus' man do not waller."

Recall Job as the prize fought for by Jehovah and Satan. In that wonderful book which tells us of this struggle we pass from act to act, from scene to scene, and the great problem of man's virtue, involving the honor of God Himself, is wrought out before our very eyes. Read Job 1:6-12. No time for dreaming is it when the soul becomes aware of the deep abyss that lies beneath, should the limbs fail in ascending the mountain of character. And the higher we climb with God's help, the more surely must we count upon these attentions from the prince of the powers of darkness.

Get the picture in Zech. 3:1-5. The angel of Jehovah, who is not to be distinguished from God Himself, contends with the Adversary for Joshua the high priest. Shall he wear the rags of sin or the robes of salvation? To-day a soul sits on the fence which separates the kingdom of Satan from that of God. Will the gold of Christ or the guilt of the devil be the stronger attraction? Just as soon as he mounts from the "I ought" to the "I will," he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Not content with Judas whom he "had already winnowed away from the apostolic

band," Satan wanted Peter. Look up Luke 22:31-34, noting the margin. But Christ prayed and worked so successfully that Peter's weak faith did not utterly give way. Though shamefully bent it did not break. And out from that awful experience Peter came, the shifting gravel of his character having become solid granite.

Individual Coaching:—

When the fight begins within himself,
A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head,
Satan looks up between his feet—both tug—
He's left, himself, i' the middle.

Are you doing all in your power to help God
win out?

STUDY VIII.

BUCKING THE LINE.

Difficulties are discipline. To lie down because an opposing line is made up of husky fellows is belittling, but to rush them down the field is ennobling. Football-Christians should adopt the motto of the pickaxe, "I will find a way or make it." We are living amid circumstances which imperatively demand that something be done. The difficulties seem so appalling that we may be tempted to fold our hands and do nothing. But standing in his own place, under the captaincy of One who never believed in defeat, each can unflinchingly buck the line, until the giant who opposes him finds himself as a grasshopper in the path of his progress. Do you prefer to be with the two or with the ten of Num. 13:26-33?

Probably we have all had spells of undertaking to resist our tempters, especially those who were already so nearly dead that we could overcome them without drawing heavily on our prowess. But "you have not yet had blood drawn in your struggles against sin" (Heb. 12:4). No, we have been more like that

soldier to whom his captain said after a great victory, "Well, Pat, I hope you had a part in it." "Indade I did, sor!" "And what did you do, Pat?" "Well, sor, I saw one of the inimy and I ran up to him and cut off both his feet." "That was bravely done, Pat, but why did n't you cut off his head?" "Faith, sor, but that was off already."

David, setting us a better example, camped down in the face of Goliath, the very toughest adversary among the Philistines. The story is told in 1 Sam. 17:40-54. Oh, to be like David! Oh, to be able to approach every giant tempter, every Goliath sin, every Philistine power of darkness, with the words, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts!" It is for every soldier of Jesus Christ to fight for a spiritual religion against absorbing secularism, for the Kingdom of God against every other kingdom opposed to it.

If we are to enjoy the thrill that comes with winning, we must strive. "Strain every nerve to enter in" (Luke 13:24). How much there is in the Gospel which appeals to the manhood of a man! To the fighter it says, "Box, but not as one that beateth the air" (1 Cor. 9:26). To the wrestler it says, "Wrestle, but not

against flesh and blood" (Eph. 6:12). To the sprinter it says, "Run, so that you may obtain" (1 Cor. 9:24).

To the soldier the Gospel says, "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). Against us are hostile conditions which are all the more difficult to overcome because they are like a pestilence,—you know that it is, but you are not sure what it is or where it is.

And he who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,
From strength to strength advancing—only he,
His soul well-knit and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

But what can be more inspiring than the eight promises to him that overcometh? Read as though they were connected Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7. God would not have you crouch, torturing yourself with a terrified watch over your lower desires. He would see you stand erect and manly, like a victor, in heroic confidence, with all your enemies beneath your feet.

Why comes temptation but for man to meet
And master and make crouch beneath his foot,
And so be pedestaled in triumph? Pray
"Lead us not into temptations, Lord!"
Yea, but, O Thou whose servants are the bold,

Lead such temptations by the head and hair,
Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight,
That so he may do battle and have praise!

Individual Coaching:—Are you so living that you will never hear from Jesus words like those with which Henry IV. greeted Crillon after a great victory had been won: “Hang yourself, brave Crillon! We fought at Arques, and you were not there!”

STUDY IX.

THE FAN.

Who is it that sticks to the baseball team until the last hope is shattered? Is it not that enthusiastic lover of the game, "The Fan"? In like manner we should be full of enthusiasm as followers of Christ, not as mere onlookers, however, but as witnesses to the truth. See Acts 1:8. We should remember that "No virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic." Christians must get out of the dog-trot of formalism into the dash of some new life. The fire of God is too often put out when it leaps and roars after its own fashion instead of assuming a respectable dullness. But better the exuberant life that makes a noise than that which acts as though it had one foot in the grave.

Shall we not be in a condition of constant spiritual enterprise instead of simply waking up once in awhile to earnest activity and labor for souls? Spiritual coldness always involves danger. Not the spirit which sighs, "O to be nothing!" but the spirit which shouts, "O to be something!" is what befits the followers of Him whose "meat to eat," of which His disci-

ples did not know, was helpful service. There is no room in the Kingdom of God for the lounge. Cowper says,—

An idler is a watch that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes as when it stands.

And “the Amen, the faithful and true witness,” adds, “Because thou art lukewarm, ... I will spew thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16).

A complimentary enthusiasm, the kind that the commission shows for the women’s department at a state fair, will not do. They set apart the best section in the main building for the worsted dogs and the canvas cats, and then never go near the place at all. That sort of enthusiasm acts on the spiritual life like water on fire. The souls of all who serve the Lord must be enkindled with adoring love. They are to move the world because Christ moves them. Their motto is found in Rom. 12:11: “In zeal never flagging; burning in spirit.”

With our whole souls aflame with love, let us “battle earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3). What a splendid sight it is to see young men living in the world and yet not of the world, not lowering to temporal personal considera-

tions their convictions in the supremacy of trust and self-sacrifice! Not by trifling, but by earnest, enthusiastic effort can we overcome our tendency to lower the things of the soul to the things of the body. Half-heartedness for Jesus ends in whole-heartedness for the world.

Has your enthusiasm for Christ ever been regarded as madness? Young men may go wild over a closely fought contest which their side has won, but any enthusiasm for Christ, they too often feel, must be kept corked up. Paul had shown some of this divine enthusiasm in his life and labors and the cold Corinthian professors sneered at him, "Thou art beside thyself." Read 2 Cor. 5:13-15. Such was the love burning like fire in the apostle's bones that it carried him on in spite of the fierce opposition of foes and the faithlessness of friends.

Jesus Himself was an enthusiast. Put together Mark 3:20; Luke 12:50; John 9:4, and any other passages which may suggest themselves. Christ felt the onrushing new interpretation of life that was coming into the world, yet He kept sweet and strong His principles. How did He do it? Only as we can do it,—by sticking to the fundamentals of life

and letting go the puny and non-essential. He met life with a great holy energy which neither worldliness nor error could cool. To the dronish mollycoddle Christ's joyously spirited pushing on toward Calvary's cross may seem a delusion or a bit of hysterics, when in fact it is a valid spiritual enthusiasm.

Individual Coaching:—Where are you most at home? With the "grin-and-bear-it" class of Christians or with those who are enthusiastically joyous?

STUDY X.

A RINGER.

Pinchbeck piety! Who make it possible? The "ringers" in Christianity, those who feign to be what they are not. A counterfeit dollar may look to be silver, but while silver on its face, it is lead in its ring. State in a single sentence the thought expressed in 2 Tim. 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:12; Luke 11:39. Moral culture may create conduct quite like character, but both God and man can see that that sort of religion is a fad. And a fad is a sham, and a sham is offensive, a religious sham being peculiarly offensive because it is a changing of something essentially ennobling to something despisedly base.

People can stand veneer in their furniture and adulteration in their pepper, but not in the treasures of the heart. What is the matter with that word hypocrite anyway? Pour into it as you utter it the milk of human kindness and the milk curdles before the first syllable passes the lips. Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus is also Lord of words. He found Humility cringing and creeping in the back alleys of Vocabu-

lary Town, and touching it with His might He made it king of words. Hypocrisy He met among the nobility, and in His indignation He hurled it from its exalted position to crawl forever on its belly as a snake in the grass. "First of all beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1, margin).

The Pharisees were Pharisees, Judas was Judas, and all other men are what they are because of their thoughts.

He that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the midday sun,
Himself his own dungeon.

Let the conditions favor and every thought will develop itself into its corresponding action as invariably and inevitably as the acorn develops into the oak. Therefore, "How long shall thine evil thoughts lodge within thee?" Read Jer. 4:14 and its context.

As long as a man can contrive to sin in such a way as to appear innocent, as long as he can say with Ephraim, "In all my labors they shall find in me none iniquity that were sin" (Hosea 12:8), he will remain a nominal Christian. And some men are so clever in hypocrisy that they continue to sin for a long time without

being detected. In fact, a crafty daring hypocrite might drive an automobile through the law of God without being punished, while a blundering novice forthwith is cast out because he trundles a wheelbarrow through.

Keeping up appearances is the great bane of Christianity. So many have the name of living and are dead. Read Rev. 3:1-6. That student from Elisha's Theological Seminary, who lost his axe-head in the Jordan, might have continued whacking away with the handle to make others think he was doing something. But after he lost his power for service, he went and told the prophet in order that it might be restored to him. Surely when Satan sees shamers at their little game, it must rejoice him exceedingly.

It is not for a Christian to ask, Will this pass muster among men? His standard should be the absolute standard of God. Between worldly believers and unbelieving worldlings there is little, if any, distinguishing difference. Indeed, when our speech is half of Ashdod and half of Israel, how are people to know where our citizenship really is? See Neh. 13:23-27. And the young man who puts on a show of affection for a young woman, who shams

devotion for his friend, who pretends to love his parents, who parades a reverence for God, is the most contemptible of all sinners.

Individual Coaching:—Are you living a life worthy a Christian? Not upon talk but upon walk will you put the emphasis, when you come to see how prone human nature is to talk cream and walk sour milk.

STUDY XI.

KNOCKERS.

What shall be done with the "croakers"? Better put them down a well where they can do the thing up properly. Fault-finding is so very natural that we all need to preach and to practice the Master's warning, "Why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eyes, and pay no attention at all to the bearing-beam (the joist) in your own eye" (Luke 6:41). Those are apt to be the hardest knockers,—

Who, their own faults, invisible to them,
Seen in another they at once condemn;
And though self-idolized in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.

How easy it was for David to pronounce the sentence of death upon that rich robber who spared his own flocks and herds and stole the poor man's one ewe lamb to feed the hungry traveler! Read the story in 2 Sam. 12:1-14. Scarcely has the flash of indignation left the eye or the flush of resentment the brow, before conscience tears to rags the elaborate embroidery of your self-deception and cries to you with its awful voice, "Thou art the man."

Is there any prayer we more need to press than that the Spirit pour upon us a double portion of that love which thinketh no evil of others? There is many a Dean Swift who delights "to drag all the graces and sanctities of life through the pools and puddles of his own mind, and after such a baptism of mud, to hold them up as specimens of what dreamers call the inborn beauty of the human soul."

"It is a terrible thing for a sinner to fall into the hands of his fellow sinners," says F. B. Meyer. With a cold-blooded indelicacy a band of scribes and Pharisees, wearing their customary badges of holiness, drag a shrinking sinner before Christ for judgment. They saw only the sin; He saw the woman through the sin. Letting a blank of silence come between their view of the woman and His, Jesus pushes them into the pit they have dug for another as He says, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." See what the fault-finders did in John 8:9.

"Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practice the same things" (Rom. 2:1). The masks that men make

may effectually cover the features of the soul from their fellows, but not from God. Manhood is what a man is, not what he seems to be. While we read faces, God reads hearts. But of all the idolatries none has been more extensively practiced than the idolatry of the outward appearance. God help us to realize that our judgments passed on our fellow men evidence the greatness or littleness of our own natures.

But not only do we "knock" those around us, we too often find fault with God. 1 Sam. 8:1-10 records an incident of carping. It is an awful thing to put our littleness over against God's greatness, our ignorance over against His wisdom. Yet what a blessing it is that when we refuse to let God have His way, He will veto our determination. Then in self-will we can pass the petition over His veto, if we wish, but at our peril. "Thy will, not mine, be done," made the Garden of Gethsemane the gate to heaven; "My will, not thine, be done," made the Garden of Eden the gate to hell.

Nor did Christ fail to come in for a share of flaw-picking. The disciples of John the Baptist nagged their master because Jesus was attracting more followers than he was (John

3 : 26). Yes, and the Pharisees were angry because Christ received sinners and ate with them (Luke 15 : 2). Having a politician's friendliness and a professional sympathy, they could not understand the One whose whole soul went out to find the other soul. Little or no character is required to set one's self up in the mud-slinging business. And is not the elder brother (Luke 15 : 25-32) in the Prodigal Son parable Christ's rebuking picture of the fault-finding Pharisees?

Individual Coaching:—Do any of you belong to what Samuel Taylor Coleridge calls, "The race of the Grumbletonians"?

STUDY XII.

DRIFTING.

Who is not inspired when looking upon a noble ship with all her sails spread, plowing her way through the waters and making direct for her desired haven? But, on the other hand, is there a more melancholy sight than to see a vessel cast from her moorings, and without helm, slowly drifting to her destruction? There is not much danger that any of us will break away suddenly and entirely from our Christian habits. But there is great danger of severing now this and now that tie which has bound us to a Christian life, until we find ourselves far away from Christ and out on the wide stream of practical irreligion. "This being so, we ought to give all the more attention to what we have been taught, for fear we should drift away" (Heb. 2:1).

The condition of the cutwater is what makes the difference between a boat and a tub; and there are a great many tubby people drifting around, who, though they mean well, have blunted the fine edge of their moral judgment and so amount to nothing. "The Spirit says

expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, ... through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, seared in their own conscience as with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:1, 2). Do the waters of evil foam angrily at your bow as you force your way through them?

It is a divine decree that nothing in the universe shall be stationary. Even the so-called "fixed stars" are now known to move. How we should scorn, then, "to furl our sails and ride at anchor in the sluggish bays" of inactivity!

God to the human soul
And all the spheres that roll
Wrapped by her spirit in their robes of light,
Hath said, "The primal plan
Of all the world and man
Is Forward! Progress is your law, your right!"

We are either forcing our way up stream or drifting down stream. We need to heed Paul's exhortation to the young man Archippus whose surroundings in the lukewarm church at Laodicea were not the most helpful. See Col. 4:17.

The Great Prophet of the Exile has said, "We all do fade as a leaf." He might have

said of the drifting professors of Christ, They all do fall as a leaf. Separated from the life-giving branch they flutter until, perchance, they finally fall upon some slow-going stream. Carried along by the current they strike against some slight obstruction. Glad to stop they are soon covered with scum, which gathers up all the dirt till they become so filthily heavy that they sink to the bottom. Is this not what the life of Judas teaches us? Examine Acts 1:25.

It is a grand thing to do the best we can where we are and as we are, but woe unto us if we do not continually strive to perform some greater service for our Master. Who of us shall be satisfied to be gold-beaters, hammering out some tiny nugget of efficacy until it thinly gilds the whole life? Shall we not rather be gold-miners, whose daily work it is to dig out new nuggets for the enriching of our lives? Stephen was doubtless content to serve Christ in the more humble work of "serving tables," but he was not satisfied to remain forever in that position. Read Acts 6:1-15.

Be not like "clouds without water, carried along by the winds" (Jude 12; cf. Eph. 4:14). Instead of giving rain, they only hide the sun. Exposed to sin, the childish Christians are

ready to be driven this way and that by the evil influences active in the world around them. Hence the nursery of Christianity is crowded, and Jesus is calling in vain for robust young manhood to take part in the great battle of life.

Mammon sought for a serving-man,
A valet of parts, who would not shirk.
And thus the words of his crier ran :
“Wanted, a Christian tired of work!”

Individual Coaching:—Are you drifting? Watch your shore-marks. Is God’s Word of deep interest to you? Are your prayers full and frequent and earnest?

STUDY XIII.

FORE.

If it is at all necessary to call out "Fore!" when a golf player drives off, it is absolutely necessary that "Fore!" shall constantly summon the Christian to watchfulness. Eternal vigilance is the price one must pay if he would not drift. "Watch ye, stand firm in your faith, play the man, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13) is the wise counsel of the experienced Paul. If we are to be Christian young men, carelessness must give way to caution, fickleness to fixedness, childishness to character, inability to influence.

But how are we to watch? It cannot be that we are always to be "on the watch." Spurgeon once said that there were friends of his to whom he would like to say: "Ye men of Plymouth, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? Go on with your work." To sit with idly folded hands and gaze is not watching. Christ shows us in the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) what watchfulness really is. "They *all* slumbered and slept," but at the cry, "Come ye forth to meet the bride-

groom," five in their preparedness for His coming at any hour showed that they had been watchful, while the other five in their unpreparedness showed that they had been foolishly unwatchful.

Even though we may cast the whole burden of our anxiety on Christ, we are not thereby excused from the duty of vigilance. Because the devil is always at hand, walking along with us to spy out our weaknesses, we must "exercise self-control, and be watchful" (1 Peter 5:8). Should we drowse off, we ought to rouse ourselves by thinking of the fearful perils that surround the sleepy Christian. If we are not exceedingly careful the worldly spirit will get possession of us and make us careless, insensible to duty and indifferent to our soul's interests. Unslumbering alertness is needed, if the slinking onset of temptation is to be beaten back.

It does not take a microscopic examination to see that the ways of the world are becoming the ways of God's children. To supply the demand of a multitude the representatives of Calvary's Christ have created a rubber-tired religion that gives every evidence of a smooth journey through life. But love of the

beautifully easy cannot be substituted for the eleventh commandment. Christianity is more than a sacrament, more than the Apostles' Creed or the Sermon on the Mount; it is a life, and to live the life we must "take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law" (Josh. 22:5; cf. Matt. 22:37-39).

Forming friendships in which religion is largely discounted, dropping into irregularity in attendance on the means of grace, a little less interest in prayer, a more careless reading of the Bible—these and others like them are rounds in the ladder by which one surely descends. "So then he that thinks that he stands, let him take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). The Christian who steps out in life "light-heartedly" is only too likely to slip. Heedlessly taking things for granted has betrayed many Christians. Too often our preparation to meet the enemy is like the fort which Washington impatiently called Fort Nonsense. It was built a mile away from the road along which the British would pass, but its guns would not throw a shot over half a mile.

Wherefore, let our watchfulness be "with prayer of every form and supplication, praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and keeping

awake thereunto with unwearying perseverance" (Eph. 6:18). Let us learn at every crisis of our lives what is the will of God concerning us. If we do His will, we shall be in harmony with Christ; if we do our own will, we shall be out of joint. Consciously we either enter into or refuse fellowship with Jesus, so that our "sin is not merely a mistake or a misfit; it is a deliberate mischoice."

I pray in me fulfil
Thy purpose true, and hold me still,
So Thou canst work in me
The thing which Thou dost see
Must nearest bring this soul to Thee.

Individual Coaching:—Are you keeping your heart with all diligence?

STUDY XIV.

THE SCRUB.

All hail to the scrub in our athletic squads!
All hail to the "Also ran" on our track teams!
Because they did not make the 'Varsity this season is no reason for saying that they never will. In most cases the enthusiastic scrub who puts himself wholly into the play will win a place on the first team finally. So if our endeavors are honest, our present failure is real growth, and growth is the markworthy quality in a Christian. "Some men are like flagstuffs—they grew; other men are like trees—they grow." To those who are manfully fighting the battle of life come as a tonic the words of Paul, "All thanks to God, who leads us in one continual triumph in the service of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14).

"Great is the facile conqueror," says William Watson,—

Yet haply he, who, wounded sore,
Breathless, unhorsed, all covered o'er
With blood and sweat
Sinks foiled, but fighting evermore,
Is greater yet.

First-try successes do not stand for as much as do those which result from many trials and some failures. Achievement is glorious, but temporary failure is also glorious, and prepares us to appreciate the cost of the achievement. "Not that I am already made perfect, but I am pressing on, in the hope of actually grasping that for which also I was grasped by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12).

In the Christian race every runner has his own peculiar lameness to hinder him. What is mine? Am I making good progress toward the goal in spite of my shortcoming? These questions we ought to answer honestly to ourselves at least. And as we are not all suffering alike, each should look to his own case and not try to prescribe for the other runners. "Wherefore brace the weakened hands and the palsied knees; make smooth paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not put out of joint, but rather be healed" (Heb. 12:12, 13).

"The Cemetery" is a plot of ground next the government testing station at Sandy Hook. It is the burying place for all waste products from the trials—the guns which have burst, the armor that has been penetrated, the mechanism that would not work. And yet on

this miserable mass of failures has been built the splendid efficiency of our navy. After proving what would not do, it has been easy to pick out what would do. How good is God to use for our own and others' welfare, not only our best endeavors, but our very blunders and our poorest efforts! Rub all spiritual currency on 1 Thess. 5:21 as a touchstone to show what is spurious and what is sterling.

We ought not to be put out of heart by failures. Are they not sent on purpose to try the stuff we are made of? Look into the history of Caleb and Joshua as recorded in Num. 13:25ff and Num. 14:20ff. Failure has a kind heart, though its hands hurt. A world where everything was easy would be a cradle for babies, but not at all a fit place for young men. Men come not to their best till failure, sometimes bitterly disappointing failure, has inspired them to make more of an effort than they even thought they could. In making the record of your life,

Though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime—
Not failure, but low aim, is crime.

What a friend Failure is! It is not meant to disfigure, but to transfigure us. Even our

flattest failures we ought to include among the "all things" that God makes work in harmony for the good of those who love Him. Get the inspiration of Jeremiah 18:1-4. There is more cause for joy than for complaint in the disagreeable failures of life. We think that failures are to discipline us, but if we will substitute a "g" for the final "e"—discipling, we will see God's reason for allowing failure to come into the lives of His children. The change of one letter makes disappointment read His appointment.

Individual Coaching:—In your failure, have you allowed your "why" to become a "whine"?

STUDY XV.

THREE BALLS AND TWO STRIKES.

In the ninth inning, with two out and three men on bases, it is a trying moment to the batter when he has three balls and two strikes and the pitcher is about to deliver the ball. What will it be? The game may be won or lost as the batter has his eye on the ball and decides whether it is over the plate or not. Just such opportunities of choice come everywhere in life. Sometime, at the parting of the ways, every soul comes to the crisis of decision when, in the mystery of choice, is sown the seed of character. It is indeed a crucial moment when some Moses sets before us "life and good, and death and evil," and urges us to "choose life" (Deut. 30:19).

We are not the playthings of necessity, nor are we the slaves of fate; we are what we choose to make ourselves. We have a freedom which we may abuse, so that the determining element in our lives is how we use the opportunity for choice. Righteousness is the choice of right by one who can choose to do wrong. There are limits, of course, to the

possibilities before any one; but in all the more important points a young man has the future in his own hands, and may make of it and of himself almost anything he will. Limited only by capacity to hear, the promise still sounds in our ears, "Ask what I shall give thee" (1 Kings 3:5).

God's voice still calls to all of us and bids each make a deliberate choice, rather than allow himself to be quietly floated into position, like the weeds in a stream that lie as the current carries them. But let us choose the better part. God cannot be pleased with the choice of a Lot (Gen. 13:8-13), but He is pleased when we value spiritual blessings above worldly good. And to those who choose the best God gives the most. When we ask aright of God, desiring only good from Him, He "gives exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think."

I knelt before Thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace with suppliant knee;
And peace was given; not peace alone,
But love, and joy, and ecstasy.

Why do we so fatally neglect to choose the treasures of heaven? Is it because we disbelieve the offer that is made of them? Or

are our hands so filled with glittering baubles and Dead Sea fruits that we cannot grasp the best gifts? When we choose to sup with the devil, no matter what may be the length of our spoon, we may be sure that when the unclean meal is over we will find that we have had only the bones, the cayenne pepper, and a big bill. Sin is running up an account which, when it comes in, must break the richest purchaser.

The wicked shall be caught in his iniquities,
And in the net of his sins shall he be taken.

(Prov. 5:22.)

In the Christian life there is no such thing as Hobson's choice. Too often, however, we do choose to take what is immediately at hand. Nowhere does the Bible tell us to seek the kingdom of God. But it does say, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33), and it is not worth seeking the kingdom of God unless we do seek it first. That old saying, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," is a lie when one of the birds in the bush is the bird of Paradise. Never should we let the temporal things that can be seen blind us to the eternal things that are unseen.

With us every day is a testing time. Some Elijah stands before us and says: "If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). As the metaphor used in the first half of this verse indicates, we are hopping-bird Christians, and it is time we settled on bough God or bough Baal and came to be at home. "How long hop ye about upon two boughs?" We must set our love moment by moment on the Lord Jesus or else the hour may come when some great choice on our part will betray the fact that our smaller choosings have not been Christian.

Individual Coaching:—Do you at every opportunity manifest your choice of Christ?

STUDY XVI.

SHINNY ON YOUR OWN SIDE.

"Shinny on your own side" is a frequent cry in hockey. It means, "Stay where you belong," and contains as good advice to Christian young men as to hockey players. Paul tells Timothy that he must stay "on side" in the great game of life. Compare 1 Tim. 6:5 with 2 Tim. 3:5. We are to be loving and sympathetic, but so long as worldliness is what it is, the Christian life can only maintain itself in an attitude of aloofness. There will always be people and impulses to which the Christian has to say, "No." The follower of Christ will not be bound to the world by any compromising connections.

So, too, the Heavenly Voice cries, "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins" (Rev. 18:4). Are we obeying the exhortation? We are asked by the Master to make our pilgrimage toward the noblest character along a path that is bright with sunshine and fragrant with flowers. And if we are loyal to the Father's will,

we cannot enjoy or love the world too much, for worldliness is slavishness to the world, not love of it. Worldliness as a spirit is a far more subtle enemy of Christ than is dreamed of by the religious caricaturists who make for the Christian life a patchwork of negative requirements and call it spirituality.

But even innocent pleasures become sinful when they pass the line of moderation or when they distract attention from the performance of duty. As James reminds us, "the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4). Sinful men, with their sinful lusts, keeping up the sinful attitude of disloyalty to Christ, are what the apostle means here by the "world." Cultivating the friendship of such, we desert God for Satan. With an idolatrous devotion we join ourselves to one who is trying to seduce us, and thus become on the outs with the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

Many people seem to think that Paul in Rom. 16:17 tells us to keep our eye on the persons mentioned as examples to be followed, as he does in Phil. 3:17. So some young

men drink a little in order to sit around with those who want to get away from them or they lie a little to impress those who are laughing at them. But we are to "mark" those who cause "divisions" and "scandals" in order to avoid them. We fall, not because the argument for right-living has been shattered, but because we have not the moral backbone to hold ourselves up to the standard. Yet the backbone is the essential feature of superiority, marking off the stronger from the vast multitude of the meaner and weaker sort. Too long we have been stooped-over Christians when we should have straightened to the plummet line in Christ.

Each of us arrays himself here among those that are to be either the sheep or the goats there. Read 2 Thess. 3:6-15. And as nothing is said anywhere in the Bible about the alpaca with its characteristics both of the sheep and of the goat, we may conclude that there is no moral middle-ground. "Righteous" and "wicked" describe what man decisively reveals himself to be in the sight of God when present tendencies have fully worked themselves out. Can any one stand face to face with Christ's cross and be neither better nor

worse? "Whatever is not sacrificial is satanic," says Joseph Parker.

Christians are to be as the Gulf Stream off the coast of Florida, where its waters are so distinctly marked that their line of junction with the common water of the ocean may be traced by the eye. Differing from the sea in temperature, saltness, color, and current, this great river is in the ocean yet not of it. We are not to be like the Gulf Stream after it passes the Bermudas, where its surface is so broken up by the winds and its waters so mixed that it is improper to speak of it as having any further separate existence. Get the big truth in 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

Individual Coaching:—Are you shinnying on the Lord's side?

STUDY XVII.

WHOSE SERVE?

Although not with the same purpose as in tennis and ping-pong, a similar question is often asked in Christian activity, "Whose serve?" One never-to-be-forgotten occasion is mentioned in John 13:1-11. Angry with one another because of the assumed superiority on the part of some of their number, the disciples filed into the supper room and took their places like so many sulky schoolboys. Not one of them was willing to remove the sandals and cool and cleanse the feet of the others. Do we fellowship with the Master and receive His holy, humble nature into our inmost heart by the Spirit? If we do not make use of our opportunity, God will take it away from us, and there will be a page in the Book of Life written over with the story of a rejected ministry.

To call a man a Christian is to ascribe to him devotion to Christ; the daily business of his life is to serve Jesus. How like blasphemy it is, therefore, to give the name of

Christ to one whose view of life is expressed in the familiar epitaph,—

Life is a joke, and all things show it;
I thought so once, but now I know it.

They only will continue Christ's work for man who cherish His love. Service minus Christ has no capital on which to do business. See Acts 9:36-43 for a good example of the serving Christian. Power, unsanctified and unconsecrated to the highest possibilities of life, dies by the sharpness of its own blade.

David Livingstone used to write at the close of his letters and articles and to say in all his speeches, "The end of the exploration is the beginning of the enterprise." So with us the end of the getting should be the beginning of the giving, the end of the learning the beginning of the application. Appointment to service is the core of Christ's Gospel. With each new call comes renewed consecration. Some of us find it hard to surrender our will to the Lord and submit to be used according to His purpose, but we should appreciate the greatness of the privilege. Just think what it means to be "God's fellow workers"! And although it may not seem so glorious, would it not be more appropriate to sing, "Only a

litter bearer," instead of "Only an armor bearer"? Read 2 Cor. 6:1 and a few verses of the context.

Upon the receipt of our commission, "Henceforth thou shalt take men alive" (Luke 5:10), we have spent hours studying "Fishology" from the habits of captured fish. But if we would have a string to present to the Head Fisherman, we must do more than theorize; we must fish diligently in the rivers and pools of wickedness. Too apt are we to think of a Christian fisherman as one who aspires for Christ rather than as one who perspires for Him. Find at least five conditions for greatness as a fisher of men in Matt. 18:1-14.

What will our Christian lives amount to, if we do not use them for something else than to serve ourselves? Who does not know nominal Christians that do not do a hand's turn for anybody but themselves? Their life motto is, Take care of number one. They hide their talent in a napkin, like the man in the Gospel, only they are meaner than he was. When the end comes, and Christ asks an accounting for what He has entrusted to them for investment, they are selfish enough to say, "Lord, here is

the talent Thou gavest me, but the napkin is mine and I want it back." Find in Matt. 25:31-46 why those on the left were condemned.

Christianity is what Dr. Maltbie Babcock calls the "Try-square Religion." One arm should go up to God in prayer and the other arm should go out to our brother in helpfulness. If a vote were taken, one of two passages would be declared our Master's motto,— "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark 10:45), or, "For their sakes I consecrate myself" (John 17:19). And if we are true to our Master we, too, will go about doing good, heartily as unto Him. When we are negligent in the Lord's service, some Jeremiah should ding in our ears, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of Jehovah lazily" (Jer. 48:10). Service is the principal thing; therefore serve, and with all thy getting, get service.

Individual Coaching:—Can you enjoy plodding heavenward in a path just wide enough for one? Can you think of any service outside the circle of your willingness?

STUDY XVIII.

SPEED TO BURN.

“How did the game come out?” shouted one enthusiast to another. “It was a cinch,” was the answer shouted back. So “dead easy,” “a walk-over,” “speed to burn,” and other like sayings indicate that the winner came off “more than conqueror” in the struggle. And this is the privilege of every athlete in Christ at every trial of strength. See Rom. 8:35-39, omitting ver. 36 in reading. Never need the Christian go crawling back to his dressing room to hatch up excuses for his defeat if he will follow the advice of his Coach. “More than conqueror” will always describe his victories, as it does that of the American navy at Santiago.

But many escape defeat at Satan's hands only by the skin of their teeth. Compare Job 19:20 with Amos 3:12 to get a picture of the survivors' shattered condition as they emerge from life's battle. But what else can be expected when they only give the devil love-taps, though they know they ought to hit him between the eyes straight from the shoulder?

We must really fight to a finish and not merely spar for points, if we are to save our lives from ruin, our souls from hell.

Only those who battle with the white heat of determination can expect to reign with Christ in power. Read Revelation 3:20 for the secret of defeat. It is a man with Christ on the outside of him. He is within enjoying the good things that God has given him, with Jesus shut out of his life. The way to conquer is to open the door of the heart and let Christ in. His presence will nerve us for the struggle, but without Him the secret undermining of the soul-citadel, as well as the open assault, will prove fatal.

Angels of life and death alike are His;

Without His leave they pass no threshold o'er;
Who then would wish or dare, believing this,
Against His messengers to shut the door?

One of the favorite sayings of Christian young men is, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Will he? Try it and see how soon you will be on your back. No! before he holds four points of your body to the mat, just look up that passage in Jas. 4:7, and you will find that those words do not stand alone. That verse is between two great commands,

not about the devil but about God. The only successful way to resist the devil is by submitting to God and drawing nigh unto Him. The modern David who has not slain the lion and the bear of his lower nature with the sword of the Spirit, runs the chance of being made into mincemeat the first time he meets the Goliath of sin.

He makes a great mistake who reckons up the things that are against him and forgets that God will be with him. The heavens are not empty. The world is not Fatherless. The only man who has a right to say, "All things are against me," is the man who has shut God out of his life. But to him who fears God and works righteousness, the promise is "I will show thee the path of life." A Captain of salvation, who "came forth conquering and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2), secures all our future for us, if we will but follow Him. To put vim into us we ought to live daily in John 16:33.

With this hope of Christ's help,

The righteous shall hold on his way,
And he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger
and stronger.

(Job 17:9.)

Every victory we win makes it easier to come out on top in the next battle. The righteous man will meet evil in the path of rectitude, but instead of faltering he presses on for the fray. There is a swiftness in his every movement. A settled strength and a cheerful confidence assure victory. The power of right living comes welling up and all fear of overthrow goes by the board. With every step along the road of character weakness becomes strength and the dawn of defeat shines more and more unto the day of perfect victory. See Prov. 4:18.

Individual Coaching:—Lowell said, “My life shall be a challenge, not a truce.” Are you saying the same?

STUDY XIX.

STICK TO YOUR MAN!

One of the essentials in basket ball is that each of the five shall cover or stick to his man. This is also necessary in the Christian, if he is to win any one for Jesus. In leading a seeker to his Saviour, he is not to stand with hat in hand, and say, "By your leave." When the retinue of the Treasurer "in the service of Candace, Queen of the Abyssinians," appeared, the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and glue yourself to the chariot." Study Acts 8:26-39. So we cannot hold aloof, touching men with the ends of our fingers, as it were, if we hope to aid them in their search for Christ.

"Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13), said Jesus, and whoever heard of salt fulfilling its office of savoring and preserving when it was kept sealed up airtight in a can on the shelf? No more can Christians savor society if their influence does not silently enter and pervade every tissue with its curative, preservative qualities. With the savor of the eight Beatitudes about us, for only then are we

“the salt of the earth,” let us apply ourselves to our fellow men to prevent moral putrefaction and decay. “Men of privilege without power are waste material. Men of enlightenment without influence are the poorest kind of rubbish. . . . If they pass for Christians they are guilty of obtaining respect under false pretences.”

As the leaven which is finally to leaven the whole lump (Luke 13:21), we must see to it that our unique quality to raise and make light has not departed from us. Meeting other lives at every turn and realizing that the righteousness of Christ is no hushed and concealed “indifferentism,” we ought to “abominate the evil and stick to the good” (Rom. 12:9). The best of advice has been given in the thought that it is better not to throw open the blinds of our lives until there is something to be seen in the window.

Seemingly by intuition the basket-ball player knows his opponent's every move. So if we would reach a man for Christ, we must try to think his thoughts, to put ourselves in his place. Have you ever tried to imagine how surprised Matthew must have been when Jesus said to him, “Follow me” (Matt. 9:9)?

He could only have expected the insolently offensive and reviling words always addressed to a publican to be spoken to him, but Christ spoke the sweetest accents of the deepest love. No wonder that at such a call he left all and followed Him.

The greatest responsibility in this world is the responsibility of knowing Christ; and there is no condemnation so terrible as that which rests upon the man who has had all the privileges and promises and opportunities of Christianity at his disposal, and yet has turned them to no account. Life depends upon contact with life. It cannot spring up of itself. It cannot develop out of anything that is not life. And spiritual life is not a visitant from without but a resident tenant in the soul. What we receive from God we are to pass on to others. Make a mental picture of 2 Cor. 9:8.

It is a characteristic of those who are filled with the spirit of Christ that they carry life with them everywhere. Even though one should go to sleep while we are talking about Jesus, it is not ours to get angry. We should try to arouse the sleeper as Paul did Eutychus, although we may agree somewhat with Moody that the young fellow who would go to sleep while Paul was preaching was not worth

awakening, to say nothing about bringing him back to life (Acts 20: 7-12). Here, as in the cases of Elijah (1 Kings 17: 21) and Elisha (2 Kings 4: 34), it is to be noted that the apostle and the two prophets were the channels through which the divine life entered the lifeless.

Individual Coaching: — “Christianity is caught not taught.” Is any one catching it from you?

STUDY XX.

FOLLOW THE BALL!

If it is an unwritten rule in football that every man on the team keep close to the pig-skin, it is a written principle that each Christian shall follow immediately in the footsteps of the Master. There are sibilant Christians enough to evangelize the world in this generation. More sermons are wanted that go about on two feet. It is one thing to recite the Sermon on the Mount; it is quite another thing to be a fleshed gospel, of which that sermon is a verbal photograph. Following Jesus is reproducing in ourselves His biography as summed up in Acts 10:38.

The constant danger is that we shall only half follow, be what Moody used to call "Haran Christians," because, like Abraham, we only half obey, stopping at Haran instead of pushing on into Canaan. See Gen. 11:31. But God wants Canaan Christians and not Haran Christians. Haran Christians call attention to self; they are noisy and boastful. Canaan Christians call attention to God; they are quiet and humble. Haran Christians are

inclined to accept the praise of the world. Canaan Christians are satisfied with the "well done" of the Master. Haran Christians allow the heart to tyrannize over the intellect; they are apt to accept everything as right that they desire to be right. Canaan Christians cause the heart and mind to rule conjointly, neither enslaving the other; they weigh all things before they declare them to be right.

That the followers of Christ are not always ready to close in on Him is shown by the unwillingness or unpreparedness of the three in Gethsemane to go "forward a little" with the Master. Note, also, that two different words for "love" are used in Christ's conversation with Peter as recorded in John 21:15-17, and if you will substitute our weaker word "like" for the "love" in all of Peter's answers and in Christ's last question, you will see that Jesus was unable to raise Peter to the level of a love-follower and Himself had to descend to the disciple's level of a like-follower. O that with the poet's fearful frenzy we might feel ready to seize a towering pine tree, dip it brushwise in Etna, and write on the heaven of our lives the testimony, "Lord Jesus, I love Thee"!

Though we cast ourselves prostrate before Christ in intellectual adoration of His manhood and our hearts are far from Him, our following is mockery. We might spread at His feet the most exquisite garlands the mind could fashion, but they would only add to His sorrow so long as we continued to plait crowns of loveless thorns for His head. Christ demands the love of our hearts before He will honor the service of our hands or the rhetoric of our heads. Recall the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

Surely we do not now admire what was once thought to be a very superior Christianity,—that thing of beauty but not of use, made for religious meetings but out of place in the everyday life (Luke 13:6-9). From thrones of delighted self-satisfaction we dare not look down on our brothers with a “practical infidelity in the guise of a piety which professes to love the unseen Father, while disregarding the claims of His visible children.” The sentimentalism which contents itself with whining over real or imaginary evils, and does nothing to remove them, is the cant of apostleship.

In Christianity there is exactly the same

difference that is noticed in machinery. The rickety and unsafe engines always make the greatest racket. What we want to do is to back up what we say with a consistent life! Dare to be as the expert accountant is with the young bookkeeper. He does not hesitate to say, "Keep your books as I do." Why should we not so follow Christ that we can say with Paul, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1)?

Individual Coaching:—Are you a Caleb of whom it was so often said, "He wholly followed the Lord"?

STUDY XXI.

SWEEP! SWEEP! SWEEP!

Why such a hasty sweeping of the ice and the "skip's" eager cry, "Sweep! Sweep!! Sweep!!!"? It is that every slightest obstruction may be gotten out of the way of the oncoming stone curled from the lower end of the rink. Thus did Jesus send out the seventy "two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come" (Luke 10:1). They were in a measure to be the advance agents of Christ. Should you meet one groping for light and hungry for bread, could you direct him straightway to Jesus? What a glorious privilege it is to be as little barefooted boys running along in the dust of the road heralding the coming of the King!

Often the path runs through the dark forest, with Judas trees on either side, and behind every bush a serpent. What a satisfaction if the one for whom you are responsible as guide can say with the dying boy: "Don't you weep for me; when I get to heaven I'll go straight to Jesus and tell Him that ever since I can

remember you have tried to lead me to Him." Paul's pervading purpose was to lead people within the range of Christ's teaching. See 1 Cor. 9:22. And often our one duty is to act as interference for some fellow who is trying to carry the ball of character over the goal line.

How careful we ought to be that our influence should always draw toward Christ. Many are in such an attitude that a breath would turn them toward the ocean of God's love or toward the gulf of perdition. The words of Paul are in nowise too strong for the one who stands in the way of a sinner seeking salvation. "You incarnation of deceit and fraud! You son of the devil! You enemy of all that is right! Will you never cease diverting the straight paths of the Lord? Listen! The hand of the Lord is upon you even now, and you shall be blind for a time and unable to see the sun" (Acts 13:10, 11). Little did Elymas realize the heinousness of hindering a fellow-being from becoming a disciple of Christ.

What solemn warnings are sounded against placing stumbling-blocks in the way of one of Christ's little ones. Put "profanity" or

“smutty stories” or any other filthy thing in the place of “meat” and read thoughtfully 1 Cor. 8:13. Thoughtless carelessness of others drowns a man in that unctuous pool of indifference which is covered with the fetid scum of neglect. Man’s ungratefulness to man enwraps, like a black cloud, the glorious ideal of Christianity, and in that hour when we turn our backs on one whom we could help on his way toward Christ we beleper our souls with the foulest curse.

“According to Jewish tradition,” says F. B. Meyer, “runners, learned in the law, were stationed at various stages to direct and help the fugitive” reach the city of refuge. Read Josh. 20:1-9. It is not the fault of God that more do not find Christ. He opened a new and living way to salvation, a pathway so plain that no pilgrim need err therein. With Cennick the saved should all cry,—

Now will I tell to sinners round
What a dear Saviour I have found;
I’ll point to Thy redeeming blood,
And say, Behold the way to God.

Christ makes it very clear that if we belong to Him, it is our business to witness for Him. When we go to Jesus to “get all we can and to

can all we get," we become stagnant pools, the water of life that God gives us either scumming over or drying up. So in Mark 16:15 and Matt. 28:19 the emphasis is on the discipling. Only one verb is an imperative, and that is not "go" but "preach." Christ seemed to assume, He took it for granted, that those whom He saved would go, in fact could not help going, but He wished them to be ever preaching by word and consecrated life His Gospel. His words, then, are, "As you go throughout the world, preach the Gospel to every creature."

Individual Coaching:—Are you in anybody's way? Get out of it at once, if you are.

STUDY XXII.

QUITTERS.

“What a streak of ‘yellow’ that fellow has!” Nothing worse could be said of an athlete, nor is yellow the color for the Christian. But who has not been tempted to “throw up the sponge” in the fight for character? So we might feel like pardoning Job had he followed his wife’s advice, “Say good-bye to God, and die” (Job 2:9); but how much more noble is this hero of Uz when he cries out:—

Behold, he will slay me: (I will not wait:)
Nevertheless I will maintain my ways before him.
(Job 13:15.)

Only thin-skinned souls are tormented into rejecting God by the insect irritation of their friends.

Yet should you leave the track after running a lap or so, remember John Mark. Though he did not finish in the first race he entered, he rallied for the second and ever after ran well up in front with those who were setting the pace. Do not forget that the one who wrote our second Gospel is the same

person spoken of in Acts 12:25; 13:13; 15:37, 38; 2 Tim. 4:11.

To flee from our Jezebels to-day is to whimper for death to-morrow. 1 Kings 19:1-4. Elijah on Mt. Carmel thrills us, but Elijah under the wild-broom plant humbles us. So the hero of that winter campaign for the capture of Quebec and Montreal in 1775 is a splendid example of patriotism, but the same man at Falmouth, England, is quite as sorry a spectacle. When asked by Talleyrand for some letters of introduction he replied: "No, I am perhaps the only American who cannot give you letters for his own country all relations I had there are now broken. . . . I must never return to the States." It was Benedict Arnold.

But Jonah, the servant-pupil of Elijah according to tradition, went a step further than his teacher. Whining under the withered castor-oil plant he is indeed an example not to be followed. Is he not simon-pure yellowness? As a moral "quitter" he is pictured the meanest-minded and paltriest of all, for his was not a heart "which nobly loathing strongly broke" as with Elijah, but he sneaked away, out of cowardly selfishness, to escape his duty toward

God. Recall his story or better still read it at one sitting in the prophecy which bears his name.

Surely to-day there is not the proportion of quitters that there was in Gideon's time, and yet there is more danger to the Kingdom of God than to the United States of the "yellow" peril. Read Judges 7:2-8. It is opportunity that draws the sharp line between the coward and the hero.

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
 There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
 And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
 A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
 Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
 Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
 A craven hung along the battle's edge,
 And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel—
 That blue blade that the king's son bears—but this
 Blunt thing—!" he snapped and flung it from his
 hand

And lowering crept away and left the field.
 Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
 And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
 Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
 And ran and snatched it, and with battle shout
 Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down
 And saved a great cause that heroic day.

Under the flag of Immanuel many tin soldiers are parading to the music of popular

Christianity, who, if they thought a real warfare was before them, would be tempted to leave the ranks. Turning our backs toward Christ instead of our faces toward the foe shows the spirit of the quitter. Shall the autobiography of our souls be stained with the record that blots the memoirs of the apostles? Ruminates Mark 14:50 with its immediate context.

Individual Coaching:—Shall we be pilloried for poltroonery? Or will we cling to Jesus as closely when they crown Him with thorns as when they hail Him with hosannas?

STUDY XXIII.

A SACRIFICE HIT.

It is no wonder that the sacrifice hits should have a special column in baseball scoring. They are an example in athletics of life's noblest principle,—putting one's self out for another's advancement. The Gospel idea is not that a man shall follow the Christian life as a mere holiday pastime, but that he shall enter into it strenuously with no reservation of strength or talent or possessions. That which especially distinguishes a high order of man from a lower order of man is the disregard of personal pleasure, personal indulgence, personal advantages, remote or present, because some other line of conduct is nearer right. Was not Christ's motto, "For their sakes I consecrate myself" (John 17:19)?

There is no salvation from sin which is not salvation from selfishness. In fact, the only salvation Jesus offers is through redeemers, and redeemers are those who have consecrated themselves for others' sake. There is no alchemy, human or divine, by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden impulses.

I, too, have my vocation,—work to do, ...
Wipe out earth's furrows of the Thine and Mine,
And leave one green for men to play at bowls;
With innings for them all! It takes a soul
To move a body; it takes a high-souled man
To move the masses—even to a cleaner sty.

“Greater love hath no man than this, to the intent that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

Self-giving, in whole-hearted sacrifice for the blessing of others, is the essential attribute of godliness. The easy thing, the pleasant thing, the selfish thing, is perfectly consistent in the minds of men with going to the devil. As some one has said, “You can tempt a man to the pit with sweetmeats, but when he starts for heaven he wants to feel that he is a hero.” Only milksops are drawn into the ranks of the Christian army by sugar-and-water coaxings. That class of Christ's followers who recline “on flowery beds of ease,” who do not enter upon the heroic opportunities that come to them, have a sickly life and die a lingering death. Their religiousness consists in a religious dress upon the old self-life. Study Mark 10:17-22.

Christ has set up His cross in the pathway

of our dearest longings and most ardent desires. The name of a hospital on the program of the Charity Ball is about as near as the world of fashion wants to come to the environs of righteousness. We are called, however, to be "crucified with Christ" (cf. Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14). Calvary is higher ground than the Mount of Beatitudes or the Mount of Transfiguration. Not by force, but by truth; not by genius, but by character; not by the sword of ambition, but by the cross of self-sacrifice, is the world to be won to Jesus.

Christ does not use, except as examples to be shunned, those sentimental religionists who are so absorbed in heaven-gazing that they fail to see Lazarus lying at the gate, or those sanctimonious priests and Levites who are in such hot haste to reach a religious gathering that they leave a half-dead fellow-being to perish by the roadside. The man who is serenely satisfied with being saved himself, and who, instead of seeking to rescue others, hugs the hope of heaven to his heart and sings,

Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast,

will never get near enough to Christ to lean

on His bosom. Look deeply into Luke 10: 25-37.

Jesus was not a divine tramp, sauntering through Galilee on chance excursions of goodness. His was a deliberate life,—each day crowded to the edge with purposes to be put into action. And because He, “for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame” (Heb. 12:2), we also should move forward steadily to obtain His great legacy to the faithful. “These things,” says Jesus, “have I spoken unto you that the joy characteristic of me may be in you, and that your joy may be made full” (John 15:11).

Individual Coaching:—The root of Christlikeness is giving our lives to be every moment “a living sacrifice, holy, well-pleasing to God.” Are you doing it?

STUDY XXIV.

THE UMPIRE.

“Foul!” The umpire within has passed judgment. Conscience has given its decision. Just as in the Caribbean Sea the sailors say there is a buried city, and that on quiet nights as they are rocking upon the deep they can hear the tones of the buried bells coming up with muffled sound from the steeples far down in the sea’s depths, so in our hearts there are dulled tones from the depths of our nature, ringing in the steeples of conscience, that tell us what is right and what is wrong. “It is not those that hear the words of a law who stand right with God, but those that obey it. . . . Their conscience, too, corroborates it, while in their thoughts they argue either in self-accusation or, it may be, in self-defence” (Rom. 2:12-16).

Though this natural faculty, which belongs to all men alike, can be over-scrupulous (1 Cor. 10:25), the real danger is that we blunt or “sear” our consciences by neglect of its warnings (1 Tim. 4:2). Yet we cannot without peril fail to heed this voice that speaks

from within. The engineer is foolhardy who disregards the red lights and dashes on with full head of steam into the darkness. The traveler is foolhardy who walks on in the tall grass, heedless of the soul-chilling ring of the rattlesnake's note of warning. But infinitely more foolhardy is he who pushes onward down the path of life without heeding the whispers of conscience.

Furthermore, there is what is called a weak conscience, a conscience unauthoritative and awakening only the feeblest emotion. See 1 Cor. 8:7. As with Goethe's mother there is then no reverence. She had an easy-going confidence in the future that at times amounted to flippancy and even to sacrilege. On her deathbed she was particularly anxious that the raisins should not be skimped in the cake for the funeral, and she replied to an invitation that Frau Goethe was sorry to be compelled to decline it, for the reason that just at that time she was engaged in dying.

Yes, sin may blunt the edge of conscience for a time, but in the case of the guilty it will sooner or later awake. What was it that troubled Herod? Compare Matt. 14:1, 2 with Mark 6:25-28. And was it otherwise with

Richard III., Shakespeare's complete and ideal villain,—the sneering, hypocritical, proud, and malignant devil? "Without remorse or dread," he "wades through blood and slaughter to a throne." But at last the storm breaks. Conscience, kept muzzled in his waking hours, now gnaws his heart in sleep. Starting up out of a dream he cries,—

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.

It is only when the conscience rises supreme and sublime in the hour of fierce temptation, with its imperative "I must," that it is pure as noted in 2 Tim. 1:3. To quote Augustine, "A good conscience is the palace of Christ; the temple of the Holy Ghost; the paradise of delight; the standing Sabbath of the saints." The sense of strength that comes to all who have "a conscience void of offence toward God and man always" (Acts 24:16) fortifies the soul. Then will their glorying be this: "The testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world" (2 Cor. 1:12).

"Our hearts sprinkled from an evil con-

science" (Heb. 10:22) is meant to be the privilege of every Christian. But the removal of the stains, so that the Father's love can shine in unclouded brightness into the soul, can only be accomplished by the blood of Christ. See Heb. 9:14. The whole aim of Christ's death is to reach the conscience, to silence its accusations. Only He who tells of the nearness of God and of the love of God, who holds Him up to us as a loving, disciplining, perfecting Father, only He can rightly educate the conscience.

Individual Coaching:—Self-indulgence will consume the conscience as rust the sword. Are you holding fast your faith and your good conscience?

STUDY XXV.

THE GOAL.

Only the runner who has won a hard-fought race or the team that has scored a stubbornly defended goal knows the thrill of joy which comes with victories like those. But each contestant for the Christ-character may experience the victor's delight. Indeed, the Christian who is joyless is a discredit to God and a disgrace to himself. Yet we have no more right to expect joy unless we do the things Jesus said would produce it, than we have to look for a dividend on money put away in a sock. "Insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with lively exultation" (1 Peter 4:13).

Sometimes we hunt for joy in applause, pleasure, or wealth, only to find that we have been on a fool's errand. Grasp the central thought of Luke 12:13-21. Where popularity is the basis of joy, it is only a great bladder which a pin of gossip may puncture. Character alone is the goal of manhood and our reaching it depends solely on our own

ambition and determination to live in God's free air of truth and right, from which all true character is inspired and fed. The Gospel calls us to "the study of a living Person, and the following of a living Mind."

The striking Prayer-Book version of Psalm 105:18, "Iron entered into his soul," indicates what we require in our struggle to reach the goal. The indwelling Christ constitutes in Himself the pledge of present joy and future glory. He is the iron we need to tone up our pampered life. We can do everything in Him who infuses strength into us. Character is the only aim that God has had from the beginning and toward this goal He is working day and night. Christ in you and you in Christ produce the character God desires. Look up the marginal reading of Judges 6:34.

God has put certain power into our hearts which we are free to use as we please. Are we using it to produce a reed-shaken-with-the-wind character, a soft-raiment character, or a prophet character? Get the key which unlocks the greatness of the last from Num. 12:7. Every one of us, thanks to the strength which comes through union with Jesus, may stand out sharp and clean in our Christian

character. What's the use being jelly-fish or dandies, when we may be men?

Best of all this manly character is to be enjoyed in the present. The grace of God not only puts a man into heaven, it also puts heaven into a man. Eternal life begins on earth. Look up 1 John 5:12. And "eternal" refers as much to the quality as to the quantity of the life, and tells us that it partakes of the blessed, timeless, spiritual nature of God. Yet we must be sure to devote ourselves to Him, not simply to some work for Him which will absorb in itself the love that should be bestowed on His divine person.

All Christ wants is for us to want Him, and when we want Him enough He will baptize our longing with the purpose of heaven, and a noble, heroic character will be ours. The young man whose daily endeavor is to live the Golden Rule will be no effeminate sentimentalist luxuriating in mere emotions, but will be disciplined like an athlete in every part of his spiritual nature. Shall it not be our determination so to live that our use of Paul's words will not be mere brag? See 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

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Individual Coaching:—In life's race are you after the fading wreath of laurel, the corruptible band of gold, or the incorruptible crown of character?

I saw them start, an eager throng,
All young and strong and fleet;
Joy lighted up their beaming eyes,
Hope sped their flying feet.
But one among them so excelled
In courage, strength, and grace,
That all men gazed and smiled and cried:
"The winner of the race!"

The way was long, the way was hard;
The golden goal gleamed far
Above the steep and distant hills—
A shining pilot star.
On, on they sped, but while some fell,
Some faltered in their speed;
He on whom all eyes were fixed
Still proudly kept the lead.

But, ah! What folly! See, he stops
To raise a fallen child,
To place it out of danger's way
With kiss and warning mild.
A fainting comrade claims his care,
Once more he turns aside;
Then stays his strong, young steps to be
A feeble woman's guide.

And so, wherever duty calls,
Or sorrow, or distress,

He leaves his chosen path to aid,
To comfort, and to bless.
Though men may pity, blame, or scorn,
No envious pang will swell
The soul who yields for love the place
It might have won so well.

The race is o'er. 'Mid shouts and cheers
I saw the victors crowned;
Some wore fame's laurels, some love's flowers,
Some brows with gold were bound.
But all unknown, unheeded, stood—
Heaven's light upon his face—
With empty hands and uncrowned head,
"The winner of the race!"



Spence

**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

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